

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
320 W. Temple Street, Suite 1184
Los Angeles, California 90012
February 7, 2005

| | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| PRESENT: | Mr. Ray Bartlett Mr. Vito Cannella Mr. Mario Ceballos Ms. Susan Cumming | Mr. Adrian Dove Ms. Rebecca Isaacs Ms. Lea Ann King Ms. Eleanor Montaña |
| EXCUSED: | Ms. Donna Bojarsky Rev. Zedar Broadous Grand Master Tong Suk Chung Ms. Judy Coffman | Mr. Albert DeBlanc Ms. Kathay Feng Mr. Thomas Saenz |
| Staff Present: | Ms. Ava Gutierrez Ms. Lisa Hart Ms. Grace Löwenberg | Mr. Eugene Stevenson Mr. Robin Toma |
| Guest: | Ms. Sabiha Khan, Communications Director, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) | |

I. INFORMAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 7, 2004

At 12:42 p.m., in the absence of a quorum, Commission Vice-President Bartlett, Acting Commission Chair, called the informal meeting to order, followed by the salute to the flag and a moment of silence.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice-President Bartlett introduced and welcomed Ms. Sabiha Khan, Communications Director, for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Ms. Khan informed that CAIR, with 30 chapters nationally, is the largest organization focused on issues of concern to American Muslims. It actively works with interfaith organizations, human relations organizations, the media, and governmental organizations to present correct information regarding Islam and Muslims. The organization has concerns regarding the stereotypical portrayal of American Muslims in Fox TV's popular television show "24" and the potential undeserved animosity it may generate against members of the American Muslim community as there are no positive images used in the series to offset the negative stereotypes.

Meetings with Fox TV executives on this issue have resulted in a disclaimer being developed for airing, featuring Keifer Sutherland, and CAIR's request that a PSA also air that puts in perspective the dangers involved in stereotyping any group. No movement has occurred on the latter item.

Commissioner Ceballos suggested that an effort to engage Fox TV on a creative level, possibly incorporating the Commission's "Zerohour" Campaign Initiative, might help on this issue.

Commission staff will confer with our contacts at the local Fox TV affiliate, who are members of our Corporate Advisory Committee, regarding CAIR's concerns, as expressed by Ms. Kahn, and Mr. Toma and Commission staff will meet with Ms. Khan to develop recommendations for possible follow-up action by the Commission.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Toma reported on the following items:

1. Letter Written by Valencia High School Student - The Commission was requested by Supervisor Antonovich's office to provide information on staff's efforts at Valencia High School concerning discrimination and intergroup issues there. This was in response to a letter discussing those issues which was sent by an African-American student there to President Bush and Supervisor Antonovich. In addition to a report that was prepared, Ms. Villa-McDowell has met with the Supervisor's deputy and the Hart Union High School District Superintendent on this matter. On Monday, February 14th, Mr. Toma and Supervisor Antonovich will be meeting with all parties involved to discuss what changes have and should be made.

Incidents recently occurring in the Santa Clarita Valley and the Antelope Valley have kept staff fully involved in ongoing school intergroup conflict and hate crime issues.

2. Stanley Miller Case Update - As announced in the media, the District Attorney has decided not to charge LAPD Officer Mark Hatfield for his actions in the arrest of car theft suspect Stanley Miller (Mr. Miller was convicted and is serving prison time). Following the heels of this incident is the LAPD's deadly shooting of a 13-year suspected car thief.

The Commission is part of the Multi-Agency Coordinating Committee in which staff has been actively working towards the goal of mitigating the impact of these events and has sent a letter to the District Attorney, requesting their active involvement in that group and in community dialogue opportunities as a means of diffusing a possible backlash.

3. John Anson Ford Event Planner RFSQ - A Request For Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) to solicit proposals from businesses interested in contracting to plan and manage the Commission's FY 2005-2006 John Anson Ford Annual Awards Event has been released to the public, with a Friday, February 11th closing date.

IV. FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. Recommendation on AB 19 (Leno Bill) - Tabled.
2. Joining CAHRO E-Mail Group - Mr. Toma referred Commissioners to a memo he included in the agenda packet informing of the California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO)'s offer of membership in a proposed e-mail group being established to keep the state's human relations professionals in communication with one another and abreast of the latest developments in the field. Mr. Toma will circulate a copy of the current Commission membership roster for updating and for indicating interest or not in being included in the CAHRO E-Mail Group.
3. Review of Commission Staff's Ethnic/Racial Demographics Review - As was requested at a past Commission meeting, Mr. Toma prepared an ethnic/racial/gender profile of Commission staff for review by Commissioners, which had been mailed in advance of the meeting in agenda packets. Mr. Toma went through the profile, and there was brief discussion with Commissioners.
4. Discussion of Article on Commission's Hate Crime Report - Commissioners also discussed an article, written by David A. Lehrer, President, Community Advocates and Joe R. Hicks, former L.A. City Human Relations Commission Executive Director and Vice-President of Community Advocates, that appeared in the Jewish Journal. The op-ed piece was critical of the Commission's hate crime work and mistakenly alleged that is the bulk of our work. Mr. Toma had sent a draft response to Commissioners and had a brief discussion regarding the misstatements and mischaracterizations in the article, as well as the devaluing of hate crime issues. Commissioners gave suggestions about how we should respond.

At 1:40 p.m., with the arrival of Commissioner Dove, a quorum was achieved, and the meeting was officially called to order.

V. APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES OF JANUARY 18, 2005

It was MSC(Isaacs/King) that the meeting notes of January 18, 2005, as amended (Cumming/Dove), be approved.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. John Anson Ford Awards (JAF) Event – Commissioner Cumming will provide nomination forms for JAF 2005 Courage and John Allen Buggs Leadership Awards to Commissioners at the next Commission meeting.
2. Legislative Committee - In Committee Chair Feng's absence, Commissioner Dove reported that the committee did not meet. However, members may be discussing whether to include non-Commission members on the committee. Mr. Toma advised that quorum was not been achieved for the first meeting, but that there are two possible dates for the next meeting, after which the committee should bring its recommendation to the Commission.

3. Youth Campaign - Commissioner Ceballos reported that the committee met and reviewed plans for the youth conference planned for September.
4. Budget/Fiscal Committee - This Committee has not met again since the last Commission meeting.

VII. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Commissioner Dove - Attended ceremonies unveiling the statue honoring former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 2:07 p.m., there being no further business, the Commission meeting was adjourned.

RST:ES:GL:TS